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«Nursing of the alienated», 1932 - the first Portuguese manual on Psychiatric Nursing and its epochal scenario

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Background

The existence of a manual, more than eight decades after its publication, raises different possibilities of analysis, from the practices of use to the expressed contents - especially when it comes to work in specific field like manual written with the intention to support psychiatric nursing education. We present the manual «**Nursing of the alienated**» by Luís Cebola, analyze the book, author, presentation of the work, structure and contents; then the local and the national context of the psychiatric care of the time.

The author

José Luiz Rodrigues Cebola was born on 1876 and died on 1967. Studied at the Lisbon Medical-Surgical School from 1899 to 1906, year of defense of his inaugural thesis, *The Mentality of Epileptics*, developed under the guidance of Miguel Bombarda at the Hospital de Rilhafoles; in this thesis, he gathered and analyzed documents of artistic expression of epileptic patients.

Worked and researched in Rilhafoles Hospital until he was appointed clinical director of the Casa de Saúde do Telhal (Telhal Health House or Telhal Asylum) on January 2, 1911, by the Provisional Government of the Portuguese Republic. Initially he would have declined the invitation, coming to accept as a service rendered to the Republic - Afonso Costa (President) thanked him for "the sacrifice, in favor of the regime" (Pereira, 2015).

This analysis is consistent with the texts of Aires Gameiro, *Evocation of a forgotten doctor, dr. Luís Cebola* and the monograph by Aires Gameiro, Augusto Moutinho Borges, Ana Mateus Cardoso and Fernando de Oliveira, *A Republican at the Convent*.

Was clinical director until retirement in 1949.

The book - presentation

Entitled «*Enfermagem de alienados*» («*Nursing for the alienated*»), identified as "Study book for the Course of the School of Nursing at the Asylum of Telhal". Note that the date of publication is 1932, prior to the official creation of the School. In the text of the presentation, we read:

"Since the assistance to the alienated began to be done in the strictly scientific sense, it became necessary to instruct nurses - male and female - as they are the best collaborators of the doctor within the field of psychiatric clinic. Study book, based on my long practice of many years, that I intended for the Nursing School Course I manage at the Telhal Asylum. Since the work on the same subject has not yet appeared, I now decided to publish it, giving the exhibition a way as much as possible, clear and concise, the first part contains basic notions of anatomy, physiology, minor surgery, hygiene and pharmacy, and the second part, indispensable technical knowledge for those who provide nursing services to morbid-minded patients both in the hospital and in the Lisbon, March 1932. Luís Cebola"

Two aspects are highlighted:

- (1) "study book, based on my long practice of many years" - which is a curious statement in a psychiatrist with a positivist background, valuing science, thus highlighting the practice;
- (2) "Since the work on the same subject has not yet appeared, I now decided to publish it"- should be noted that the teaching of psychiatric nursing started in Portugal in 1911, with little time difference, at Hospital Conde Ferreira and at Miguel Bombarda Hospital.

The book - structure and contents

The book has two parts - "General Part" and "Special Part".

In the **general part**, five chapters on anatomy, physiology, minor surgery, hygiene and pharmacy.

The **special part**, starts with "Definition of alienated and nurse's qualities".

"Alienated is an individual who manifests mental disorders, as a rule of an antisocial nature" (p. 133).

Considers

that

" the practice, the common sense and even the convenience of the alienated and the family impose their internment, as soon as possible, in a health house or appropriate hospital. Only in these psychiatric establishments are there conditions favorable to cure or, at least, to their improvements. To assist an alienated person is to dedicate attention and care to him, as if he were an ordinary patient. We should not forget that many alienated people notice the nurse's posture and manner. He therefore needs to be neat, correct and docile. However, in certain cases, it is indispensable to be firm in order to overcome the patient's resistance, after all persuasive words and affectionate gestures have been exhausted. Cold-bloodedness and good education exclude, for useless and counterproductive, brutality. Also one of the great qualities of the nurse is being an observer. During the service, exercising due vigilance, can avoid record unpleasant scenes and dangerous acts and record important notes that will then provide to the doctor. Finally, it is up to him to be obedient to his superiors, carrying out his orders, and discreet, not giving strange reports that harm the patient or families. "(P. 133-134).

In summary, the nurse's qualities include: dedicating attention and care to the alienated person as if he were an ordinary patient; be careful with the posture and manners. Present yourself neat, correct and docile, firm, endowed with cold blood and good manners. Be an observer, exercise anticipatory surveillance, record occurrences. Be obedient and discreet.

In the following chapters, discusses "how to take the patient from home to the hospital", "when the patient enters", the designations (close to the idea of categories) of "Nursing personnel". The structure is similar to a patient path in the House.

Proceeds to distribute the alienated according to the "*tendencies and reactions of the patients by the reports of the entrance and by the doctor's examination*" forming three groups: Agitated, Quiet and Unclean.

"*In the most important alienated establishments there are still other divisions: semi-tranquil, epileptic and hysterical, criminal, infectious and workers*". This typology - "agitated, calm, unclean" -, corresponding to symptomatic evidence, had a functional and organizational purpose and dedicate a chapter to each group.

In "the division of the agitated", he pays special attention to the means of restraint, the behavior to be taken when dominating a patient and the placement (exemplified with photographs) of the force vest (p. 139-141) and the wearing of the overalls.

«In the division of tranquilizers» refers to clinothrapy - staying in bed - and reinforces the need for vigilance and recommends that nurses "will not abandon the alienated who manifest suicide ideas".

«In the division of the unclean», designation given to the "alienated people who usually get dirty with feces and urine" (p. 149), in which the nurse develops measures "against the sad and disgusting spectacle of filth". It points out the risk and treatment of bed sores, which seems to be relevant data, considering the concern with skin integrity. Makes autonomous references to care for "epileptics and hysterics", "alcoholics and morphologists", "serious occurrences" in which it includes self-mutilation (p. 159); «Hydrotherapy», «Dietary regimes», «Writings, drawings and manufactured objects», «Walks, games, readings and other amusements», «Getting up and lying down», «Night watch», «Beard and hair», «Visits», «Transfers», «Agony and death».

Luís Cebola advised nurses to collect and keep all the writings, drawings or paintings made by the patients, favoring expressive and artistic activity. One of his creations was an ergotherapeutic museum.

Notes on the epochal scenario

At this time, there were four psychiatric institutions: two public (Manicómio Bombarda and Hospital Conde Ferreira) and two under the responsibility of the Order of S. João de Deus (Casa de Saúde do Telhal, for men, and Casa de Saúde da Idanha, for women).

The official teaching of psychiatry was created in 1911, in Lisbon (at Rilhafoles Hospital, later called Manicómio Bombarda), in Porto (at Conde Ferreira Hospital) and in Coimbra (at University Hospital), being the «teaching asylums» also called psychiatric clinics, attached to medical schools as a complement to psychiatry teaching.

With regard to psychiatric nursing, the decree of 22 February 1911 had created, months before, a course for nurses and helpers, in Bombarda Asylum.

Thus, the regulation of the psychiatric nursing course in February and the official teaching of psychiatry in May, both date from the same year, 1911.

The fragility of the republican regime would last from 5 October 1910 to 28 May 1926, with a progressive secularization in the early days and an unsuccessful search for economic development. The transition period from the military dictatorship to the Salazar regime (from 1926 to 1933-34) was already considered as one of the most agitated and complex in our history in this century. In June 1932, after countless conflicts and revolts, António Salazar assumed the leadership of the Government, making the transition to "Estado Novo", a fascist regime that remains until 1974.

Conclusions

As the author states, there was no manual for psychiatric care nurses. Thus, the book «*Nursing of the Alienated*» was truly the first Psychiatric Nursing book in Portugal. According to a diachronic perspective, we will be able to verify the passage from the "mad" to the sick, a slow transition from a socio-cultural valorization of madness to the knowledge of mental illness. Let us note, conclusively, the extraordinary vision of Luís Cebola, ahead of his time, especially with regard to ergotherapy, the humanism and delicacy with which the alienated should be treated.

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